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Notes of the Month.

Elsewhere in this month's issue reference is made to the recent visit of the Rev. Louis C. Cornish to the North of Ireland. Such visit was of more than passing significance. As the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association he came bearing the cordial greetings of kindred congregations across the sea, emphasising the many ties of friendship and affinity which bind us together. Opportunity was afforded the visitor of expressing his strongly-felt interest and good-will in two of our Belfast churches, the First Church, and Mountpottinger, and also at Downpatrick. Further, he met in friendly intercourse and conference many of our ministers, while his wife, who accompanied him, made the acquaintance of ladies interested in our congregational activities. We have reason to know that from these points of contact there followed on both sides much pleasure and real stimulus. Mr. Cornish has assured us personally how greatly he and his wife enjoyed their visit, while there is every reason to know that they most favourably impressed all who were privileged to meet them. Mr. Cornish has since been heard in many of our English pulpits, and there, as here, only mutual benefit can be the consequences. Such a religious *entente cordiale* needs every encouragement, since it must foster a fact of far-reaching importance—the friendly understanding and fellowship of Great Britain and America.

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Soon after his return home this month Mr. Cornish will take part in a great celebration of American Unitarians in the City of Baltimore. One object of the gathering will be to mark the centenary of a famous sermon delivered by Dr. Channing at the ordination of Dr. Jared Sparks. The effect of that utterance was felt throughout America, and was hardly less perceptable here and in other British lands. Even now it is unsurpassed as a clear, convincing statement of the Unitarian faith, and for that reason we give in another part of the magazine a careful summary of Dr. Channing's sermon. We commend it most earnestly to our readers, not only as a means of establishing a spiritual connection with the thought of our American co-religionists, but also that we may consider, and perhaps re-discover, weighty reasons for the faith that is in us. It may be that in some particular we cannot accept Dr. Channing's conclusions. He would be the last to ask us to do so. While he sets forth cogently and convincingly the faith which was his, it is his heartfelt

desire to stimulate thought and to quicken personal faith in the spirit of the text he elucidates: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." What a vast deal of good there is in the sermon for each of us to prize and to possess no one can fail to see who gives to Dr. Channing's sermon the earnest attention it deserves.

* *

Last month our congregation at Comber entered on a new stage of its history with the installation of the Rev. J. G. Davies, late of Banbridge, as its new minlster. The actual ceremonies could hardly have been more encouraging or more prophetic of future good. Not only were the Comber people themselves present in good numbers and good heart, but ministers and members of other congregations were there to give their benediction to the proceedings. As was fitting and customary, the members of the Presbytery of Bangor took charge of the service of installation and made it most impressive. The happiest spirit prevailed at the social functions, and the presence of Mr. Dunkerley appropriately linked together the historic past and hopeful present, while pointing forward to a happy future. After such an opening we confidently expect, as we most sincerely hope for, the truest success in the work of the Comber congregation.

* *

Writing in the *Guardian*, Dean Inge says: "So far as I can see, the bankruptcy of the country is certain; and, after bankruptcy, the normal course is through anarchy to militarism." He sees in Christianity, as a view of life and a way of living, the only hope that our civilisation may escape the fate which threatens to overwhelm it. "It is mere muddle-headedness," continues the Dean, "to think of this conflict as a struggle of the poor against the rich. The miners, the most turbulent and unpatriotic section, are earning double the average family income; and the great unions are large capitalists, who use their capital, very profitably to themselves, in periodic raids (like the annual razzias of the Assyrian kings) upon the community, from whom they levy a constantly increasing tribute. The real poor are patient and quiet enough, as men in despair always are.

A CHANNING CENTENARY.

On May 5th, 1819, Dr. Channing delivered a sermon at the ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks, in the City of Baltimore, U.S.A. That discourse is regarded a marking an epoch in the history of American Unitarianism. Consequently, there will meet in October in Baltimore a large representative gathering of Unitarians, including British representatives, to make solemn celebration of the centenary of its delivery. But, great as was the influence of Dr. Channing's sermon in America, it was hardly less so in this country. Dr. Bruce was impelled by its cogent appeal to adopt the Unitarian name, while it proved an equally influential factor in the spiritual experience of many other Ulster Christians. Thus, it has a direct interest for us, and for that reason, as well as because of its own intrinsic excellence, we give below a summary of Dr. Channing's great discourse, adhering as far as possible to his own words:—

Since the Unitarian position is often misunderstood and misrepresented, it is essential to make it plain. This can be done by showing (1) the principles we adopt in interpreting the Scriptures, (2) some of the doctrines which the Scriptures, so interpreted, seem to us clearly to express.

(1). "We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ." But we are charged with exalting reason above revelation. Hence it is needful to consider the relations of reason and revelation. Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books. "Hence the Bible demands, for the sake of its revelation the frequent exercise of reason—we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyind the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject and the aim of the writer his true subject, and, in general, to make use of what is known for explain-

ing what is difficult, and for discovering new truths." This is in accord with our divinely-endowed nature. "We honour revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers." If the use of reason in religion has its dangers, the abrogation of reason is fraught with even greater, as the almost endless errors of theology show. "Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings. Its exercise is called forth by the character of God If it be maintained that infinite truths cannot be grasped by finite minds, and that it only remains for carnal reason to acquiesce, the answer is two-fold: First, it is impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom should expose those whom he would teach to infinite error. Second, "he cannot sport with the understandings of his creatures. . . An infinitely wise teacher, who knows the precise extent of our minds, and the best method of enlightening them, will surpass all other instructors in bringing down truth to our appreciation, and in showing its loveliness and harmony. . . God's wisdom is a pledge that whatever is necessary for *us*, and necessary for salvation, is revealed too plainly to be mistaken, and too consistently to be questioned, by a sound and upright mind."

In accord with such principles of interpreting Scripture, we derive these distinctive views:—

(1) "In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's UNITY, or that there is one God, and one only.

The objection to the Trinitarian doctrine is that it subverts the unity of God, and that impels us with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, to protest against it as irrational and unscriptural. If intended for belief, how comes it about that not a single verse can be cited in its support? If preached, what opposition it would have aroused amongst the Jews. Yet there is no indication in the apostolic writing of any such controversy. Furthermore, the doctrine of the Trinity, besides subverting the idea of God's unity, is unfavourable to devotion, "by dividing and distracting the mind in its communion with God It is a great excellence of the doctrine of God's unity, that it offers to us ONE OBJECT of supreme homage, adoration, and love, one Infinite Father, one Being of Beings, one original and fountain, to whom we may refer all good, in whom all powers and affections may be concentrated, and whose lovely and venerable nature may pervade all our thoughts." Not only does the Trinitarian doctrine join to the Father other objects of worship, but it takes from him his own and transfers it to the Son.

(2) In the second place, "we believe in the unity of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus is one mind, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God." That unity is subverted by the view that assigns to Jesus a dual nature, and credits him with two consciousnesses, two wills, two souls, infinitely different from each other. Again, Jesus plainly distinguish between God and himself, as do his disciples also, and emphasises his own inferiority. This pervades the New Testament. "It is not only implied in the general phraseology, but repeatedly and decidedly expressed, and unaccompanied with any admonition to prevent its application to his whole nature."

(3) "We believe in the *moral perfection of God.* We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition as well as in act; good, not to a few, but to all; good to every individual, as well as to the general system. . .To give our views of God in one word, we believe in His Parental character. We ascribe to Him not only the name, but the disposition and principles of a father." Consequently, we repudiate any views which impugn his true paternal character, and cast dishonour on the Creator of men. "We ask our opponents to leave to us a God worthy of our love and trust, in whom our moral sentiments may delight, in whom our weaknesses and sorrows may find refuge. We cling to the Divine perfections."

(4) We believe that Jesus "was sent by the Father to effect a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods." We differ from others in regard to the precise influence of his death on our forgiveness. "We earnestly maintain that Jesus, instead of calling forth in any way or degree the mercy of the Father, was sent by that mercy to be our Saviour; that he is nothing to the human race but what he is by God's appointment; that he communicates nothing but what God empowers him to bestow; that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially, and eternally placable, and disposed to forgive; and that his unborrowed, underived, and unchangeable love is the only fountain of what flows to us through his Son We conceive that Jesus is dishonoured, not glorified' by ascribing to him an influence which clouds the splendour of Divine benevolence"

(5) Since it was Christ's mission, as we believe, to restore men to virtue or holiness, we must give our views concerning the nature of Christian virtue or true holiness. "We believe that all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of framing his temper and life according to conscience."

"Among its virtues, we give the first place to the love of God. We believe that this principle is the true end and happiness of our being; that we were made for union with our Creator, that His infinite perfection is the only sufficient object and true resting-place for the insatiable desires and unlimited capacities of the human mind, and that without Him our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love would wither and decay. . . God, as He is essentially goodness, holiness justice, and virtue, so He is the life, motive, and sustinence of virtue in the human soul."

"Another important branch of virtue we believe to be love to Christ. The greatness of the work of Christ, the spirit with which he executed it, and the sufferings which he bore for our salvation, we feel to be strong claims on our gratitude and veneration. We see in nature no beauty to be compared with the loveliness of his character, nor do we find on earth a benefactor to whom we owe an equal debt. We read his history with delight, and learn from it the perfection of our nature. We are particularly touched by his death, which was endured for our redemption, and by that strength of charity which triumphed over his pains. His resurrection is the foundation of our hope of immorality. His intercession gives us boldness to draw nigh to the throne of grace, and we look up to heaven with new desire when we think that, if we follow him here, we shall there see his benignant countenance, and enjoy his friendship for ever."

We attach great importance to the benevolent virtues, and are sometimes reproached with exalting them above piety. "We regard the spirit of love, charity, meekness, forgiveness, liberality and beneficence as the badge and distinction of Christians, as the brightest image we can bear of God as the best proof of piety." There is one other virtue we seek particularly to hold in remembrance—"the duty of candour, charitable judgment, especially toward those who differ in religious opinion."

Holding such views, we desire to diffuse them—their purity makes us seek and hope their extension through the world.

The discourse ends with a note of earnest exhortation to the ordained minister to preach and practice the Unitarianism thus outlined, and urges the hearers generally to make their lives its concrete exemplification.

WHAT MUST WE DO?

The "Christian Commonwealth" recently contained an interview with Canon Burroughs, a young man who has in a short time made himself a

power in the Church of England. He is a native of Kingstown, Co. Dublin, and is now Examining Chaplain to the Bishops of Liverpool and Exeter, and Honorary Chaplain to the King, and a Canon Residentiary of Peterborough. In addressing the Protestant Dissenters of the Three Denominations last year, he said, "The real question now facing us, I venture to think, is not how we can achieve a closer unity, but what we must do to fulfil our function. It is only by functioning properly, to use an ugly but convenient word, that the Church can at any time save itself; and now, more than ever, it is obvious that unless we justify our existence by doing what we claim to be here for, we shall share the ruin from which we failed to save the world." "A closer unity among the Churches" has been a watchword for many years. In some instances Churches have found it possible to give up their distinctive sectarianism and merge themselves into a larger body. A movement is simmering in Ireland for drawing together in one body the Episcopalian and Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Free Catholic movement has done something to draw together people of different denominations into an organization which embraces Catholic and Protestant, and this may prove a forerunner of a wider and more tolerant Christianity in the future.

It may be, however, that when unity is least thought of, and individuals and denominations simply forget their differences in more pressing work, that unity will be most quickly brought about. Canon Burroughs defines the Kingdom of God as "a commonwealth of human souls united by a common obedience to the will of our Father in heaven." That means something practical in the world, obedience to a superior will means action. The Church then carries out its purpose, when, after finding out what the world needs, it sets itself to satisfying those needs. "The restoration of the supremacy of conscience is the task which underlies all statesmanship."

We have attained Peace after the war of nations, and find under our feet the seething revolutionary forces of a class-war, which would involve us in far greater misery than the war just closed.

"Direct action" which means sabotage, the destruction of property, such as machinery and mines and the means of existence, is a method advocated without any thought as to how the community at large will be affected. Workers inflict injury upon fellow-workers, and the acutest suffering comes upon the weak and helpless. The late war was a climax in the struggle between "might and right," so is this class-war. How shall we answer the question, "What is it the world needs?" that the Church may give its answer and do its duty?

A social conscience!

"Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," was the old order, and the present condition is merely one of supplanting individuals by groups, who make stronger individuals, so that we have a section of a trade utterly indifferent to the welfare of the trade as a whole, and dislocating the whole. Men's Unions and Masters' Unions become opposing camps. The old relationship between master and man, the good understanding between the two, is fast disappearing, when men do not even know who it is they are working for.

The ideal of the ancient trade guilds was built upon conscience. Apprenticeship was the first initiation into the guild, and a man took a pride in his craft, and was jealous for the honour of his guild. "All true work is religion," said Carlyle. There is no degradation in honest work, and the shame will be in shirking the responsibility and duty of rendering to the world service as a justification for one's existence in it. There is a poverty which carries with it the possession of the true riches. At the call of duty it may demand the surrender of all outer possessions. Francis of Assisi gave up everything, so did the Brothers Minor, who afterwards were the Franciscans. "Blessed are the poor" were the first words that fell from the lips of the Divine Teacher on the Mount.

Francis carried out to the very letter as far as he was able the instruction of the Master. But it is our duty to hold in trust as much as it may be to give away when the occasion demands it. "He that provideth not for his own household hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." Kings, amid all the magnificence of their courts, have in days gone by been spiritually poor, inwardly dissociated from their externals. What must we do? Give the message of our Lord, and He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." Ponder this thought dispassionately, reasonably, and the truth that it is in reality the Good News will shine forth, for it contains the solution of all the bewildering social problems that are to the fore to-day. A very few words, but their content would fill volumes.

ULLIN.

SUBSTITUTION OR IDENTIFICATION

Earnestness and sincerity are always entitled to respect in orthodox or heretic, in Catholic or Protestant, Evangelist or Unitarian. There is a powerful book entitled "Pardon and Assurance," which, no doubt, has many readers in County Down, where in his day the author was well known.—The Rev. William J. Patton, of Dromara, Co. Down (1829–1895). In the Irish Presbyterian Church his influence was considerable, and the establishment of its mission in China is largely due to his advocacy.. When at New College, Edinburgh, he attended the ministry of Dr. Thomas Guthrie. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Ards. His one church was Dromara. At the age of eighteen he read the Memoir of the Rev. Robert Murray M'Cheyne. Three names are associated in the present writer's mind by the direct testimony of one who knew the whole three of them—Chalmers, Burns, and M'Cheyne. Burns was the first Scotch missionary to China. The name of Chalmers is a household word in Scotland, and M'Cheyne is remembered as a young minister of great brilliance and power, whose ministry only lasted ten years.

Looking back upon those years, the dominating force of eternal torment in the thoughts of great and good preachers give cause for regret that their devoted work should be marred by this terrible nightmare, which even to-day, notwithstanding the advance theology has made, is still the belief of the great majority.

After reading the life of M'Cheyne, young Mr. Patton was in a state of great anxiety about his soul, and in a field near Donaghadee he prayed very earnestly and wept bitterly for his sins. "He seemed to argue that if he were elected he would be saved, if not, he must be damned, and that, therefore, he would have to take his chance. In late years his doubts were settled by the word "whosoever." "Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." From that point he accepted Christ as his substitute, resting all on Him." But is not this a faith, divorced from life, reducing a good life to "mere morality." For this is the way in which Mr. Patton made his earnest appeal: "Five years ago, say, two men lived in your neighbourhood. They are now both dead. One of them is in heaven, the other is in hell. What was the difference between them? It was not that at that time the man now in heaven was a better man than the man now in hell. Perhaps he was the worse of the two; but the difference was that one man was led to see that he was a sinner, and that Jesus was offered to him as his Saviour (or Substitute).

This, in very direct and plain words is the thought that is in the minds of thousands.

They have never learned of the Father's love, of that At-one-ment, in which He shares His life with His children, and in which His children share His life. Christ, "the first-born among many brethren," knew in Himself the realisation of this, and so He was able to identify Himself with his younger brethren, to share their griefs

and joys, to feel their sin and shame as His, to pour out His life with the repentant sinner striving upwards. The glory that shall be revealed in us is not an external righteousness taken from another and thrown over us, for as we are all children of the one Heavenly Father, we bear His image, and ours it is to bring that Christ-in-us out into our outer lives, so that the glory is that of the Christ-in-us made manifest.—ULLIN.

BRITISH-AMERICAN GOOD-WILL.

NOTABLE ADDRESS IN DOWNPATRICK.

The Rev. Louis C. Cornish, secretary of the American Unitarian Association, and representing the entire body of Unitarian churches in the United States and the Dominion of Canada, occupied the pulpit of Downpatrick First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church on Sunday, 27th July.

In the morning Mr. Cornish took for his text, "Would God that all the Lord's people would prophesy." After giving a report of the work being carried forward by the churches he represented, he pled for the need of interpreting life in terms of spiritual value, and believed this could be better done by closer co-operation between all the several groups of Unitarian Churches in the world.

In the evening Mr. Cornish spoke eloquently to a large congregation upon the need of maintaining and increasing good-will and mutual understanding between the British Empire and the United States. He told how the first federation of the little American settlements in the seventeenth century stated that they were drawn together by their "mutual concernments." Whatever causes of misunderstanding there night be, the mutual concernments of the Empire and the Republic far outweighed them. He enumerated some of the difficulties of understanding the States. While everyone in this island knew of the great Irish migration to America, it was not so well known that other lands had sent great numbers of settlers.

Here, for example, was the list of persons of foreign birth in 1910 living in the five New England States, the oldest part of the Republic. There were from Spain, 705; Roumania, 1,046; Belgium, 3,542; Holland, 3,934; Newfoundland, 4,227; Switzerland, 6,502; European Turkey, 8,143; Wales, 8,225; Denmark, 13,972; France, 17,072; Atlantic Islands, 20,511; Norway, 22,844; Asiatic Turkey, 24,511; Hungary, 25,021; Greece, 28,099; Portugal, 43,915; Finland, 74,644; Scotland, 97,740; Austria, 107,027; Sweden, 126,471; Germany, 168,299; England, 267,696; Italy, 283,261; Russia, 293,116; Canada, 495,143; Canada (French), 609,241; and from Ireland, 979,352.

The English-speaking peoples readily assumed their responsibility of American citizenship. But peoples wholly unused to free institutions had to learn that privileges of citizenship also meant responsibility. In the five New England States no less than 60 per cent. of the population were either foreign born or the children of foreign born parents. These facts were typical of the whole nation. The Republic was the largest experiment in pouring together all the peoples of the earth. Its great cities were marvellous examples of the way different races could live together in good-will, and be bound together by mutual concernments. The great distances should also be remembered. Texas was larger than the area of the British Isles. It was only one of the 48 self-governing commonwealths bound by their mutual concernments into the Republic.

As the common interests of these widely scattered and differently descended Americans transcended the smaller rivalries and antagonisms, so the mutual concernments between this Empire and the United States could overcome for ever the smaller difficulties. The two touched boundaries for thirty-five hundred miles. Yet between the Dominion of Canada and the United States there were no fortifications of any kind, had not been any for a century and, please God, there never should be any. There was good-will between the

Dominion and the Republic. The mutual concernments held them in peaceful bonds. At the bottom of the Empire and Republic were the foundation institutions of freedom and representative government. Above both were the same ideals of liberty under law and peace throughout the earth.

If these two great peoples could not understand one another and recognise their mutual concernments, what hope was there of understanding between really divergent peoples like the Turks and the Japanese? If the Empire and Republic continued and increased the present good-will, then the world would have its greatest hope of permanent peace. This question was really of paramount and urgent importance, and it must not be left to chance. We all had witnessed what the deliberate sowing of ill-will and antagonism had meant to the world; the military rulers of Germany deliberately created and increased national jealousies. We must sow the crop of good-will if we hoped to harvest it. In conclusion, he urged that not only the American Unitarian Churches which he represented and the Unitarian Churches of the Empire to which he was sent, but all the Churches of every name should take up this task, which was nothing less than applying the teachings of Christ to international affairs.

Mrs. Ferguson, of Newtownards, who has a rich, powerful soprano voice, rendered with much feeling the sacred solo, "Abide with me," Miss Laura Cochrane being accompanist.

We understand that Mr. Cornish is to speak in a number of Unitarian churches in Scotland and England before he returns to America in September.—"Down Recorder."

Memorial Notice.

MRS. W. J. MOORE,

CLADY, TEMPLEPATRICK.

The congregation in Templepatrick has sustained a great loss in the death of Mrs. William Johnstone Moore, which took place at her residence, Clady, on the 12th August. Although in her eightieth year, she kept up all her interests to within a fortnight of her death, and to none of those interests was she more loyal and attached than to those which touched her religion and her Church. She was one of our most devoted members. On Sunday, 17th August, Rev. A. Turner, referring to the great loss which had been sustained, said—"It may be that some would say that such a life was in the main uneventful, but if it did lack events, it was nevertheless characterised by a steady persistence in well-doing, which meant much for the well-being of those with whom she came in contact. Spending and being spent for others, she was faithful to her family, to her friends, to her duty, to her religion, and to her God, and these," said the preacher, "were the things that mattered, these were the passports into the life everlasting." Suitable lessons were read and hymns sung, and after benediction, the Dead March in Saul was played, the congregation standing. Mrs. Moore, whose husband died some years ago, leaves four daughters and two sons to mourn her loss. Her eldest son, Mr. John B. Moore, has been for many years secretary of our church, the younger son is Dr. James Moore, of Belfast. To the sorrowing sons and daughters we tender our deep sympathy.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

Sept. 7.—*Binding the strong man.* Read Matthew xii. 22–30. Key text, Matt. xii. 25.

1. *Jesus' mastery over evil spirits.* Before medical science was so far advanced as it is to-day, there was a vast number of diseases for which no scientific treatment was known. Chief among these were mental and nervous diseases, such as insanity, epilepsy, paralysis, and certain forms of deafness, dumbness, and blindness. Anyone who was afflicted with these diseases was

said to be possessed with or under the influence of a daimon, which is translated variously as "evil spirit," "demon or "devil." The only known cure for one so afflicted was for a strong personality to cast the "evil spirit" out. At the present day some such treatment is still necessary, and has been frequently employed with soldiers who have had the use of their limbs or of the organs of speech, hearing, and sight deranged through shell-shock. In Jesus' day it was especially the religious men, *e.g.*, the Pharisees themselves, who used to cast out "evil spirits." Jesus, just because of his supreme goodness, was extraordinarily successful in these sad cases, his strong personality taking control of the sufferer, and, by filling him with a new will, driving his afflictions away. In a simple, general way, what happened was this:—"I can't walk," said the sufferer." "You can," said Jesus, and his strong will gave the lame the power to walk. So with the deaf and dumb. Jesus made them feel able to hear and talk, and thus the "evil spirit" was driven out. For *elder scholars*, note that Jesus always employed the popular language about "casting out evil spirits." To-day we call it faith healing, or in scientific language, psychotherapeutics.

2. *Jesus' reply to the Pharisees.* Jealousy at our Lord's wonderful success led the Pharisees to declare that only by being in league with the prince of evil spirits could he so overpower them. His reply is twofold and in parable form. (1) *The kingdom divided against itself.* If a nation or a family wishes to prosper, there must be no dissension. We all stand or fall together. The family wellbeing consists in mother and father, brothers and sisters all seeking to help each other. Nor can we hope to do good work as a nation unless we overcome all class and sectarian bitterness, and work together for the common good. The application of this is, that the kingdom of evil stands for what is evil. But Jesus was obviously doing good by his healing. Therefore, so far from his being in league with evil, he was actually overcoming it. (2) *Binding the strong man.* No strong man would stand idly by and let anyone rob him of his possessions. Now Jesus was, by driving "evil spirits" away and entering the hearts of the afflicted, robbing the Prince of Evil of his cherished property. Therefore Jesus must first of all have overcome the Prince of Evil. Herein lies the deep moral significance of this lesson. Jesus was able to wage war against evil and bring joy and health to the sinful and suffering, because first he had overcome evil in himself. He had cast the spirit of evil entirely out of his own heart, and thus became the welcome friend and helper to all evil-afflicted souls. So we, too, if we would help others, need to cast all evil out of our hearts.

September 14.—*Blind Guides.* Read Matthew xv. 10–20. Key text, Matt. vii. 3.

1. *What defiles a man.* It was on this point that Jesus was bound to come into conflict with the Pharisees. They and he agreed that a man's duty to God was to keep himself clean. But they differed in the meaning they gave to "clean" and "defiled." The Pharisees were mainly concerned with the things that could be seen, so they laid down strict laws about cleanliness in behaviour, dress, body, and food. Anyone who did not behave as they; dress, wash, and eat as they, was regarded by them as defiled. Hence in their sight no man was good who did not pray in their way, read the same religious books, observe the Sabbath as they did, wash themselves as often as they did, and eat the same sort of food. They meant well. All the things they laid stress on were more or less important, but they had no direct reference to the state of a man's heart. We know that people can be clean and respectably dressed, can give big subscriptions, and so on, and still be bad; and even be strong supporters of their church, and pray, and pray, and still be villains. From the point of view of Jesus, who taught that the kingdom of heaven is nowhere unless it be in our hearts, all these things matter little. They are external things, and cannot defile a man morally. Moral cleanness

or uncleanness depends on whether the heart is clean or not, for as our heart is so will our thoughts and feelings be. Hands may be dirtied, clothes torn, and even the Sabbath broken in a good cause. The *good cause* is the thing.

2. *Blind Guides.* A blind man would sooner have a dog with eyes to guide him than another blind man. In the most important things of life, a great many of us are blind, and need someone to guide us. We need help to keep to the good path. But we must be careful about whom we follow. Lots of folk are ready to tell us the way who do not know the way themselves. They think because they are a bit bigger or cleverer, or more smartly dressed, that they know everything. The Pharisees were blind guides because their eyes were shut to the need for a clean heart. See key text. They offer to remove the little speck from our eyes, but they cannot really see to do it because a great beam of self-righteousness fills their own eye. No one can guide who is conceited, bigoted, and self-satisfied, as the Pharisees were. The path is very difficult, full of pit-falls, and to tread it aright we need God in our hearts. But he cannot come to our hearts unless there is room. Those who aim at love, helpfulness, modesty, purity, and honesty, have God, and therefore they can guide. Let us, therefore, before we presume to point out the faults of others make sure that we have not a more grievous fault. Here is a brief story. A little girl had a pet bird in a cage. Two boys named Joe and Tom quarrelled because Joe insisted on releasing the bird on the ground that it was wicked to cage it. Tom objected that the little girl loved the bird, and would weep to find it gone. Joe said that he didn't care what she felt, birds ought not to be caged. He gave no thought either to the fact that the bird might starve, since it had no experience of getting food for itself. In fact he thought of nothing except of getting his own way. Therefore, his "good" deed in relieving the bird had no value, because he gave no thought to pleasing anyone but himself. He had the *beam,* Tom only the *mote* in his eye. Good deeds depend entirely on the heart behind them. We cannot guide or rebuke others unless we have the right heart toward them.

September 21. *Weather prophets.* Read Matthew xvi. 1–12. Key text, Matt. xvi. 3.

1. *The demand for a sign.* The Pharisees, like many more folk, were unwilling to receive a new religious teacher unless he could show them some wonderful sign. Just as they would ask a prophet of health (a doctor) to prove himself by healing someone, so they asked this prophet of the kingdom to prove his words in some way. They were not wrong in this. What Jesus objected to was the sort of sign they wanted. He came to bring men to God, and they expected some sort of wonderful conjuring trick from him. That has been the difficulty with truly religious men throughout history. They speak of God, and the foolish world says, "make us or yourself cleverer, richer, or more powerful than others and we will believe you.

Weather prophets. Jesus rebuked them by showing that they were looking in the wrong place for a sign. They knew how to tell the weather. The sign for good weather is a red sky at night; for bad, a red sky in the morning. No, they made no mistake in earthly things; but for heavenly or spiritual things they failed to look for heavenly or spiritual signs. The only sign he laid stress on was the sign of Jonah, namely, "repent." Until men repent of their faults they cannot see the reality of the heavenly kingdom. Here is a lesson for all, young and old. If we would believe in Jesus, we must heed the sign "repent." Lots of boys and girls wonder where God is, and what the kingdom of heaven is like. Let them first try to be good, and pure, and helpful, and they will find that God is close at hand, and that they are actually living in the kingdom of heaven. "How can you believe in a Heavenly Father?" a sceptic once asked a good man. "Just as easily as I believe in myself, for He is in my heart." "How can you?" the sceptic continued, "be-

lieve in a kingdom of God?" "Just as easily as in the family that dwells about me," was the reply, "because we are the kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" the inquirer continued." "Why cannot I see God and enjoy the kingdom?" "The only way I know," said the good man, "is for you to try your best to be good, and to love those about you. Repentance for our faults, and love for our fellows, these are the only signs that God gives us." For *elder scholars*:—N.B.—The significant fact that Jesus does not refer the Pharisee to the miracles that are recorded about him as a sign of his mission. This does not mean that Jesus did not perform miracles. Some indeed of those recorded he most likely did not perform, and they were added by men, who, like the Pharisees, missed the true sign. Many others, undoubtedly he did perform, particularly miracles of healing. But the significant fact remains that Jesus did not seek to prove his authority by means of miracles; it was out of the goodness of his heart, not to convert men. And Christianity would carry on his work more effectually if it paid less attention to miracles and more to the sign, "repent."

3. *The leaven of the Pharisees.* This does not beling to tc main lesson. The chief thing to remember is that what a man is, and what the world is, depends on two kinds of leaven—one the leaven of self-righteousness and pride, and the other the leaven of love and humility. A touch of the former corrupts the whole lump, just as one bad apple will make all the others bad. A touch of the former will brighten and purify the whole lump, just like yeast mixed with the dough. If we find a touch of selfishness or pride in our hearts, we must beware, for unless we check it, and eventually destroy it, it will spoil our characters and other people's lives. To counteract it we need to keep always at hand some of the leaven of love and humility.

September 28.—REVIEW.

E. H. P.

SIX MONTHS IN A GERMAN PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP.

BY REV. P. GODDING.

V.—11th November, 1918.

(Continued.)

One day early in November of last year when we looked at our Camp copy of the Frankfurter Zeitung we saw in a large type heading that Germany was asking for a Waffenstillstandgebote. We all stared at the word—asked each other what it could mean. One officer, a Frenchman, said he hoped the Germans would get it, if the thing desired was anything like its name! At last, with the aid of a dictionary, we found it meant "a-standing-still-of-weapons-arrangement"; in other words, or rather in a "word," Germany was asking for an armistice.

Can you recall Armistice Day at home, reader? or say, can you ever forget it?

They have told me a few things—How the mill and factory horns shrieked the news and the church bells rang the glad tidings. How the people left the workshops, business, and houses, and let themselves "go" the whole afternoon and evening. Staid old men and ladies became as children again, youths and maidens became hysterical and business of all kinds came to a standstill. It was a never-to-be-forgotten day—a day of madness.

But such a contrast in our camp away there in Germany itself!

At 1-30 p.m. I was in my cell exchanging library books, when a young German entered. "I great news hat," he said. "It peace is. We the Armistice signed hat!" and so on. Then he read to us a translation of the terms that his people had signed. We hardly dared to believe it. And the immediate return of prisoners!

In a body (for the news spread in the "twinkling of an eye" right through the camp) from all the rooms of our large prison barracks the prisoners poured out into the courtyard. Out there was our sergeant-major, pale-faced and worried calling out "Schentle-

men ! Schentlemen ! no noise, no noise!" We all pressed round to hear what he would say. Somebody brought a box (one of our Geneva Red Cross biscuit boxes), and he stood on it, while we formed a pressing mob round him, and there he addressed us. He was wearing a huge red rosette in his buttonhole (the badge of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council), and in his address begged and prayed of us to keep very quiet. He told us it was peace now, but there was a terrible revolution going on outside. He told us of murders that had occurred just outside of our very gates. He told us that so long as we kept quiet, not attracting the attention of the people outside, they would be able to protect us, and if possible in a few days they would escort us home. But if we sang or shouted, or made any noisy display, the townspeople might break through our guard (now our protectors), and we should all be murdered ! For, he told us, we have much food in the camp and the people outside knew it and wanted it.

Do not expect me to describe our feelings. Of course we promised to keep quiet, and there was a calm the rest of that day in our camp like the calm preceding a great thunderstorm, when the wind suddenly drops and the air is charged with electricity. Many of us even spoke in whispers. I held a service at 6 o'clock that night. It was a service of thanksgiving for victory, but prayers for courage in dangers.

That night (to give one incident) there was a young officer, a poor fellow who seemed to have suffered most through the unnatural life of the last six months, who called out in alarm in his nightmare dreams. When I went to him I found him in a cold sweat and trembling. We all felt the possibility of being murdered in our beds that night. I do not think many slept. In the morning we were all relieved to see the same blue sky above us, and were even grateful at the sight of our sentries and the old sergeant-major. There was better assurance given us then. Things are quieter, we were told. All the officers (in the German Army) had been told to go home—their services had been dispensed with for three days. At the end of the third day they were given the alternative of wearing the Socialist badge in the place of the signs of their commissioned rank, or of being shot. I understood they all wore a red ribbon long before the third day had ended !

But that evening we were told (in all good faith—for our guard had read it from their papers) that King George had fled the country, Lloyd George had been assassinated, the British Fleet in revolt was flying the red flag and had gone to join the German Fleet outside the Kiel Canal, Portsmouth and London Ports were in open rebellion, and the Socialists of all nations had the upper hand everywhere. But on the fourth day this wild scaring news disappeared. The three erstwhile bullying German officers returned to the camp minus their signs of rank, even to the button removed from their caps, wearing the red ribbon. Now they were all smiles, their bullying braggadocio had gone, and they shook hands with us, told us we should be home soon, and asked us to speak a good word for them to the authorities when we got there. Oh, it *was* a change ! That night (I believe I told you in a previous article) two big waggon loads of spring mattresses arrived in the camp for us, an idea prevailing among these humour-lacking people that one night in a comfortable bed would create an impression cancelling those of the previous six months on hard boards.

Then the great iron gates opened, and we went out for our first walk ! To be outside those walls was a queer experience at first. You see we had been confined within a small courtyard all that time. And the feeling of being free ! And members of a conquering nation ! The children ran about in and out of our ranks, asking us for biscuits and wanting to hold our hands. Then it was we learned that the people were on our side, or wished us to think so. They smiled at us, and some explained to us that always they liked the British, though before they dared

not show it, because it was to us that they now owed their freedom. Of course our one desire was to get out of their country before they knew what the peace terms were to be. Having seen the Armistice terms, we could fairly well guess the sort of *final* terms these people would have to sign.

Then we were told that all the trains were available for us as the Army was being rapidly brought home from the line; that soon (in two days) our camp would be in the area of the occupied territory, and so as we could not be moved *toward* the line, we should have to be moved further *inland* but only for a few days. It was a great disappointment; but having seen the attitude taken up by the populace, we did not mind that; and, although we were feeling impatient and (may I say it?) somewhat homesick, we thought we could bear with a few more days.

So next morning we packed up and were detailed in three or four different batches to be sent away to other camps.

(To be continued.)

Reports.

Antrim.—The Tercentenary Celebration. On Sunday, 10th August, the Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A., preached to a large congregation in the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Antrim, on "Early Memories of the Antrim Congregation." In the course of his remarks he traced the history of the Antrim congregation from a very early period, and stated that the spirit of co-operation began with the coming of Rev. John Ridge, the Puritan. He laid great stress on the principles taught by Rev. James Duchal, Rev. John Abernethy, and the "Antrim Meeting," the last-mentioned being the name given to the monthly meeting of clergymen from County Antrim and Co. Down who assembled in the town of Antrim for the purpose of furthering the cause of religion. A rather interesting and historical point was mentioned by the lecturer when he told the congregation that the Puritan spirit prevailed here until 10th June, 1642, at which time Presbyterianism was first organised in Ireland. Then the Antrim Church was absorbed as a part of organised Presbyterianism. There were many visitors present at the service, and our congregations in Ballyclare, Crumlin, and Templepatrick were fairly well represented. We hope to be able to give a fuller account of the lecture in the October number.

* *

Banbridge.—The Young people of this congregation have placed in front of the pulpit a handsome specially-designed mahogany table, on which is placed a fine solid silver flower vase on ebony base, with the following inscription:—"In loving memory of Stanley P. Bell, who died 18th December, 1918, aged 28 years, from the young people of this congregation."

It is a fitting and appropriate memorial to a short but useful life in the church he loved so well, and whose early death we all deplore.

* *

Cairncastle.—The Annual Sunday School Treat was held in ideal weather on Friday, 25th, when there was a fine gathering of scholars and a good sprinkling of the elder folk. Tea was served at 3 o'clock in the school-room, after which all adjourned to the Windy Hill field, as usual, where all kinds of games, competitions, and races were indulged in. The minister had made six pairs of strong stilts, which gave great enjoyment to the young folk, After a photographic group had been taken, and some more games played, all the scholars went back to the school-room for lemonade, sweets and cakes, while the elders and their friends played and danced in the field till ten o'clock, when they all went to the school-room and danced till nearly three o'clock. It was a most succesful and enjoyable day.

On Sunday, July 27th, the minister exchanged pulpits with the Rev. W. G. Marsden, of Ballycarry.

* *

Dunmurry.—Rev. J. A. and Mrs. Kelly, of Dunmurry, deserve the best thanks from all our ministers for the friendly and most enjoyable gathering

at their picturesque Glebe on Tuesday, July 22nd, to meet Rev. and Mrs. Cornish, representatives from our American Unitarian denomination. The day was beautifully fine, and a good muster of our ministers (about twenty) were present. Apologies were read from those who were detained owing to funerals, marriages, etc, or were taking it easy by the seaside, which, by the way, is easily learned in the Emerald Isle, as it is Erin's song the whole day long—

"Learn to take it easy." If you can't be easy, be as easy as you can.

A sumptuous repast, everyway worthy of the genial occupants of the Glebe, was heartily enjoyed by all those who were privileged to be present. After-dinner speeches are often formal enough, but our host could not be formal if he tried, hence a free and easy opening of our minds on life's various problems was indulged in. After the usual toast to the King, the Rev. Alex. Gordon vivaciously gave the toast of "President Wilson and America." He had never crossed the Atlantic, but had chosen to visit Germany rather than America, in bygone years. The war, and America's noble part in it, gave him insight now into what he had lost, and he visualised for us the great benefits arising out of the closer union of the two great English speaking nations. Rev. Mr. Cornish answered on behalf of America in a quiet, cultured, penetrating address. He pictured America's immense problem in governing peoples all huddled together from every nation under heaven, and touched on the vast influences arising from such converts as William Sullivan, the Irish Roman Catholic, and his Unitarian propaganda in America; the Syrian penniless emigrant, Abraham Nutrie Rihbany, now the occupant of the pulpit made famous by James Freeman Clarke; and the philanthropic Jewess, Mary Aiken. Mrs. Cornish also gave a most interesting speech on American women's work during the great war. The willingness for conscription, and voluntarily depriving themselves of the luxuries of life that the Allies might have necessary food. We then adjourned outside, and by quiet questions and remarks, felt that isolation is the great barrier to understanding each other; that it is sympathy alone can read and see the future; that the "open principle" has tended to make us something like a rope of sand—"Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe our hermit spirits dwell and range apart." We do not seem to attract those persons whose principles are not only clearly defined, but are EARNESTLY HELD, and such persons are nearly always the backbone of the religious community. There is bound to be a certain lukewarmness in every community where that type of character is not found. The ordinary person one meets has uncertainty about most things, but is nevertheless possessed with a VERY deep reverence for the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The cry for sympathy with that vitalizing principle can never be satisfied by non-interference by others. It demands the SYMPATHY of others as the very breath of its being, and it cannot be expressed when the environment is indifferent to the emotion. No man's reverence for Christ can be satisfied by the promise of non-interference; it requires before all else a congenial and responsive atmosphere. A living church depends on being able to produce THAT atmosphere.

We not only enjoyed, but were deeply profitted by the téte-a-téte gathering at Dunmurry, which was almost entirely due to the marvellous combination of the "Martha and Mary" characteristics so conspicuous in our hostess, Mrs. Kelly

* *

Greyabbey.—A special service was held in the afternoon of Sunday, the 10th August, at which the preacher was the Rev. Matthew R. Scott, Sale, Manchester. A large and attentive congregation listened eagerly to an impressive and inspiring sermon. The collection for the new organ fund amounted to over £50.

* *

Unity Guild.—The July Pic-nic of the Unity Guild was held at Moneyrea on

Saturday, the 26th ult., and again we were favoured with an ideal afternoon for out-door enjoyment. The party left the Central Hall in brakes, and on arriving at Moneyrea were received by Mr. and Mrs. Turkington, to whomour very best thanks are due for so kindly placing the use of their house and lawn at our disposal. After a stroll through country lanes, the party returned to Mr. Turkington's, where the time quickly passed in games, etc. It is feared that one member of the party had to be more energetic than was quite agreeable to himself in the game of "hen and chickens." Just before our departure a pleasant surprise awaited us in the form of a delicious repast of "curds and cream," provided by our kind host and hostess.

The last pic-nic of the season will be held on Saturday, September 6th to Colin Mountain.

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